

BBF-SBC PASTOR YOKES WITH SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTISTS, CHARISMATICS, WOMEN PREACHERS

November 21, 2002 (David Cloud, Fundamental Baptist Information Service, P.O. Box 610368, Port Huron, MI 48061, 866-295-4143, fbns@wayoflife.org; for instructions about subscribing and unsubscribing or changing addresses, see the information paragraph at the end of the article) –

Pastor Jerry Falwell, who is a member of the Baptist Bible Fellowship as well as the Southern Baptist Convention, regularly disobeys God's Word by yoking together ecumenically with those who hold false doctrine. A recent example occurred in January of this year at the Beyond All Limits Conference in Orlando, Florida.

This conference was sponsored by New Evangelical leader Bill Bright, founder of Campus Crusade for Christ, and by James O. Davis of the Assemblies of God. Bright and Davis have co-authored a book titled "Beyond All Limits: The Synergistic Church for a Planet in Crisis."

THE ECUMENICAL AGENDA

While there were good things that were taught via the Beyond All Limits outreach, such as the importance of evangelism, prayer, and discipleship, at its heart is the deadly and unscriptural philosophy of ecumenism. While the Beyond All Limits conference was advertised as "the beginning of a worldwide effort of developing godly, innovative, Spirit-filled, visionary pastors and evangelists," in reality, it is seeking to create an even grander ecumenical unity even than that which currently exists within the Billy Graham-Promise Keepers-associated circles.

In the *Beyond All Limits* book, Bill Bright says, "For over fifty years, I (Bill) have worked with anyone and everyone who loves our Lord whether these individuals were mainline Protestant, Orthodox, Catholic, or Charismatic. ... St. Augustine coined this axiom as a basis for agreement between believers of different Christian communities whenever questions of doctrine arise: 'In essentials, unity; in nonessentials, liberty; in all things, charity.' This is an excellent criteria to use when judging the legitimacy of a call to church unity" (Bill Bright, *Beyond All Limits*, 2002, p. 168).

Note that Bright does not quote the Bible as the authority for his ecumenical unity. Instead, he quotes "St. Augustine," one of the fathers of the Roman Catholic Church. The heretic Augustine's maxim sounds reasonable, but it is unscriptural. The Apostle Paul taught Timothy to allow "no other doctrine" (1 Tim. 1:3). That is a very, very narrow approach to the truth! The unity prescribed in the Scripture is the not the modern ecumenical-Augustinian "unity in diversity," but is a true unity of oneness of mind. Note the instruction Paul gave to the church at Corinth: "Now I beseech you, brethren, by the

name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that YE ALL SPEAK THE SAME THING, and that there be NO DIVISIONS among you; but that ye be PERFECTLY JOINED TOGETHER in THE SAME MIND and in the same judgment.” The same instruction was given to the church at Philippi: “Only let your conversation be as it becometh the gospel of Christ: that whether I come and see you, or else be absent, I may hear of your affairs, that ye stand fast IN ONE SPIRIT, WITH ONE MIND striving together for the faith of the gospel.” This unity can only be found among strong Bible believing churches that stand in the old apostolic paths. There is only one faith (Eph. 4:5). It is “the faith once delivered to the saints” (Jude 3), and the believer’s job is not to change that faith or to despise part of it or to relegate part of it to a “non-essential” role, but to earnestly contend for it (Jude 3).

WHO WAS AUGUSTINE?

What kind of man was “St. Augustine” (354-430 A.D.)? He was a persecutor and the father of the doctrine of persecution in the Catholic Church. The historian Neander observed that Augustine’s teaching “contains the germ of the whole system of spiritual despotism, intolerance, and persecution, even to the court of the Inquisition.” Augustine instigated bitter persecutions against the Bible-believing Donatists who were striving to maintain pure churches after the apostolic fashion. He was the father of a-millennialism, teaching that the catholic church is the kingdom of God. He taught that the sacraments are the means of saving grace. He taught that Mary did not commit any sin. He believed in purgatory. He was one of the fathers of infant baptism, claiming that unbaptized infants were lost, and calling all who rejected infant baptism “infidels” and “cursed.” He exalted the authority of the church over that of the Bible.

WHAT IS ESSENTIAL DOCTRINE?

Returning to the Augustinian ecumenical philosophy, the question really is what is “essential” doctrine?

Is the doctrine of prophecy essential? The Apostle Paul taught that it is. In 2 Timothy 2:16-18, Paul warned about two false teachers by name: Hymenaeus and Philetus. What was their error? Verse 18 describes it: “Who concerning the truth have erred, saying that the resurrection is past already...” They were not denying the resurrection; they were simply spiritualizing it. They were spiritualizing prophetic events. That sounds very much like amillennialism to me! This is certainly not a false teaching that is considered “essential” in the ecumenical circles, but it was considered essential by the apostles. What about the doctrine of the church? Paul taught in 1 Timothy 6:14, “That thou keep this commandment without spot, unrebukeable, until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ.” What commandment? The commandment given in 1 Timothy. And what was that? The theme of 1 Timothy is church truth. “But if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the

pillar and ground of the truth” (1 Tim. 3:15). In 1 Timothy, Paul dealt with such commandments as forbidding women to teach men (1 Tim. 2:12) and standards for pastors and deacons (1 Tim. 3). Those are not considered “essential” things among ecumenists, but the Bible considers them essential. Such things are to be kept until Jesus comes, and as of this writing, that hasn’t occurred! All of the speakers at the Beyond the Limits conference ignored the solemn instruction of 1 Timothy by allowing women to teach men.

In practice, almost no doctrine is essential to men like Bill Bright and Billy Graham and the other leaders of the New Evangelical ecumenical program of our day. What about the doctrine of the sole intercessory office of Jesus Christ (1 Tim. 2:5)? Is that essential? Obviously not, because ecumenical leaders regularly yoke together with men who pray to Mary and consider the Catholic saints as proper intercessors in the faith. What about the doctrine of justification? Is that essential? Obviously not, because, again, the ecumenical leaders often fellowship with men who teach that justification is not by faith and grace alone but by faith plus works plus sacraments. We have documented these things extensively in our 371-page book *Evangelicals and Rome*. What about the doctrine of the dead and the doctrine of Hell? The Bible plainly states that the dead in Christ go to heaven and that Hell is a place of eternal fiery punishment. But these are not considered essential doctrines by ecumenists, because they yoke together with Seventh-day Adventists and others who deny these important Bible truths.

Augustine’s philosophy led to the formation of the Roman Catholic Church. Similarly, at the end of the Billy Graham-Bill Bright ecumenical road of our day is the religious harlot of Revelation 17.

JERRY FALWELL AND FRIENDS

Sadly, Jerry Falwell, a professing fundamentalist, a member of and featured speaker for the Baptist Bible Fellowship, was one of the speakers at this conference.

By his participation, Falwell joined hands with the following, among others:

**** Pentecostals and Charismatics** such as Jack Hayford (Foursquare Pentecostal pastor who teaches that tongues speakers can begin with “baby tongues” and progress to more adult tongues), and Thomas Trask, David Sobrepena, and Tommy Barnett of the Assemblies of God. In his message at Beyond All Limits, Hayford said, “Miracle signs confirm God’s Word.”

**** Southern Baptists**, such as Adrian Rogers, James Merritt, Robert Reccord, James Henry, Ed Young, Jr., and Charles Stanley

**** Women preachers**, such as Kay Arthur, Vonette Bright, and Anne Graham-Lotz

** Ray Boltz, who glories in the fact that he has performed his music for Mother Teresa

** Bill McCartney, founder and President of Promise Keepers, a ministry that promotes unity between Roman Catholics and Protestants and that once had a Roman Catholic director

** Joseph Stowell, president, Moody Bible Institute, who has said, “God never intended that our differences would divide us. Promise Keepers Clergy Conference in Atlanta [which brought together Protestants, Catholics, Seventh-day Adventists and others] showed the unity that is possible.”

** Stephen Olford, who told Foundation editor Dennis Costella in an interview that he loves liberals more than fundamentalists

** Church Growth gurus Rick Warren and Bill Hybels, who teach that the church should not preach hellfire but a positive, low-key message that appeals to the unsaved

** Psychology promoter Garry Smalley

** Leonard Sweet, who is Dean of the Theological School at the liberal Drew University (it has, among other things, a society and lecture series named after Roman Catholic priest Henri Nouwen) and who occupies the E. Stanley Jones Chair (Jones was a modernistic missionary to India)

** Paul Cedar, chairman of Mission America Coalition, one of the most ecumenical ventures in existence, “a partnership of hundreds of Christian leaders, denominations, ministers, and local churches”

** Wintley Phipps, pastor of Seabrook Seventh Day Adventist Church

Brethren, beware of these changing times and of the compromising, changing men who are leading multitudes of gullible church members down the path of apostasy.

Finally, don't expect the Baptist Bible Fellowship and the Southern Baptist Convention to publicly rebuke Jerry Falwell for his disobedience, but do expect them to rebuke and mock men like me who warn about it.

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